

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Jessica Rhoades 406.444.3160**Adequate Yearly Progress Report Released on Montana Schools
Student Achievement Improving, Majority of Montana Schools Meet Federal Requirements**

(HELENA) Superintendent of Public Instruction Denise Juneau today released the eighth annual Adequate Yearly Progress Report (AYP) to comply with the federal No Child Left Behind Act. A large majority of Montana's public schools met the federal education requirements. Juneau also released data that show consistent improvement in student test scores over time. The report shows 597 (73%) of Montana's 823 public schools currently meet the requirements of the federal law.

"Students and teachers have been working very hard to improve test scores in reading, math and science. Their effort is demonstrated by the progress in our overall academic performances statewide." Juneau stated.

Percentage of Students at or above "proficient" in Reading and Math 2003-2010		
	Reading	Math
2003-2004	62	57
2004-2005	68	59
2005-2006	78	61
2006-2007	81	63
2007-2008	81	63
2008-2009	82	64
2009-2010	84	67

[Source: Montana criterion-referenced test scores, MontCAS]

Juneau said the academic growth is confirmed by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (known as the Nation's Report card), the Education Trust, and the states rising ACT scores.

According to 'The Nation's Report Card' in 2009, only two states scored higher than Montana eighth graders in math and reading. In math, only Minnesota outscored Montana, and in reading, only Vermont did. Massachusetts was the only state that outscored Montana in both math and reading in 2009 for Grade 8.

Montana has been recognized by the Education Trust for increasing student achievement in reading and math for both American Indian and White students over the past six years. Montana was also one of six states recognized for achieving significant progress toward closing the achievement gap between low-income students and their peers.

The state can point to gaps between low-income students and higher-income students that are among the smallest in the nation, and ACT scores that are higher than the national average.

Schools are required to meet 41 benchmarks on the state test to meet AYP under No Child Left Behind. A school's adequate yearly progress is calculated based on test participation, academic achievement, graduation rate and other statistics. But every few years, the percentage of students who must pass state tests increases.

“Rising targets for AYP make it appear that schools are not performing as well when test scores are improving,” said Juneau.

Nationwide, millions of children are still a long way from reaching the law’s ambitious goal — that every student, 100%, be able to read and do math at their grade level by the year 2014.

Montana standards have also gone up. Juneau said that the Office of Public Instruction now requires that 85% of students graduate from each high school in order to make AYP, up from 80% last year. The agency also changed the formula this year to require that more schools participate in the tests.

The “Adequate Yearly Progress” status of each Montana school and district is summarized on the Office of Public Instruction’s web site at: http://opi.mt.gov/Reports&Data/Index.html?gpm=1_3

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